

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
DHA-02 TRSE-00 OMB-01 EB-07 ACDA-07 /069 W
-----074309 241314Z /45

R 241113Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY WARSAW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8841
INFO USIA WASHDC
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

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EO 11652N/A
TAGS: PFOR, PL
SUBJ: JAMES RESTON INTERVIEW WITH PZPR FIRST SECRETARY EDWARD GIEREK

1. NEW YORK TIMES COLUMNIST JAMES RESTON VISITED
WARSAW JUNE 22-23 AND, ACCOMPANIED BY HIS WIFE,
HAD A ONE-HOUR INTERVIEW WITH FIRST SECRETARY GIEREK
ON THE MORNING OF JUNE 23. RESTON ALLOWED AN EMBASSY
OFFICER TO LISTEN TO A TAPE OF THE INTERVIEW.

2. IN REPLY TO RESTON'S QUESTION ABOUT HIS REACTION
TO THE NEW U.S. ADMINISTRATION, GIEREK BEGAN BY
DESCRIBING THE "VERY GOOD" POLISH RELATIONS WITH THE
PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATION. DESPITE "SOME MINUTE
PROBLEMS," GIEREK SAID, RELATIONS HAD DEVELOPED VERY
WELL IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS "IN KEEPING WITH THE
TRADITIONAL FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES."
GIEREK SAID IT WAS DIFFICULT "AT THIS TIME" TO SAY
SOMETHING DEFINITE ABOUT THE NEW ADMINISTRATION.
PRESIDENT CARTER HAD INDICATED HIS WILLINGNESS TO
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WORK WITH POLAND, GIEREK OBSERVED, NOTING
SPECIFICALLY THE LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT, RECENTLY GIVEN
TO HIM BY CONGRESSMAN ROSTENKOWSKI. GIEREK EMPHASIZED THE POLISH
GOVERNMENT'S EXPECTATION THAT ALL UNDERSTANDINGS REACHED DURING
THE PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATION WOULD BE CONTINUED.
"NOTHING HAS CHANGED SO FAR," THE FIRST SECRETARY
ADDED.

3. RESTON RECALLED HIS RECENT CONVERSATION WITH CHANCELLOR HELMUT SCHMIDT, IN WHICH THE GERMAN LEADER EXPRESSED OFF-THE-RECORD DISPLEASURE WITH PRESIDENT CARTER FOR ALLEGEDLY MISLEADING HIM WITH PROMISES TO PLAY DOWN U.S. HUMAN-RIGHTS POLICIES. SCHMIDT TOLD RESTON THAT THESE ASSURANCES WERE PASSED TO GIEREK, TITO, AND BREZHNEV (RESTON WAS VAGUE ABOUT WHAT CHANNEL WAS USED FOR THIS) AND THAT HE THEN WAS EMBARRASSED WHEN THE UNITED STATES CONTINUED THE EMPHASIS ON HUMAN RIGHTS, SPECIFICALLY WITH THE RECENT REPORT TO THE CSCE COMMISSION. GIEREK EVADED THE ISSUE BY SIMPLY SAYING THAT HE HAD NOT YET CONSULTED WITH THE PARTICIPANTS WHO ATTENDED A RECENT POLISH-WEST GERMAN CONFERENCE. THE FIRST SECRETARY THEN DESCRIBED THE CONVENTIONAL EASTERN EUROPEAN POSITION ON HUMAN RIGHTS, STRESSING THAT "THE PROBLEM SHOULD BE CONSIDERED IN ITS ENTIRETY." POLES WERE PRIMARILY CONCERNED, GIEREK SAID, WITH "CREATING THE CONDITIONS

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OF WORK AND LIFE FOR ALL PEOPLE," WHICH INCLUDED DETENTE AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION. HE LISTED POLISH ACHIEVEMENTS IN PROVIDING OLD-AGE BENEFITS, MEDICAL CARE, AND EDUCATION. GIEREK ALSO CITED FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE IN POLAND, CALLING THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH "ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL IN

THE WORLD." IT OPERATES "IN COMPLETE FREEDOM," GIEREK CLAIMED. HE ALSO ASSERTED THAT NO DISCRIMINATION EXISTS IN POLAND BETWEEN BELIEVERS AND NON-BELIEVERS. ALL THAT MATTERED WAS THAT A PERSON BE HONEST AND WILLING TO WORK FOR HIS COUNTRY. GIEREK SAID THAT MANY PARTY ACTIVISTS HAD WIVES AND MOTHERS WHO WERE BELIEVERS, BUT THIS WAS NOT HELD AGAINST THEM.

4. RESTON ASKED GIEREK ABOUT "POLITICAL PRISONERS" IN POLAND. THE FIRST SECRETARY REPLIED THAT THIS, OF COURSE, DEPENDS ON HOW THAT TERM IS DEFINED. CONCERNING PEOPLE JAILED FOR THEIR POLITICAL VIEWS, THERE ARE "NO SUCH PRISONERS." THERE WERE "SEVERAL" LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PEOPLE, GIEREK ADMITTED, WHO HAD BEN IMPRISONED "FOR CAUSING HARM TO THE STATE." HE CITED ONE EXAMPLE OF AN INDIVIDUAL WHO EXPLODED A BOMB IN A HALL WHERE A MEETING WAS SCHEDULED. REFERRING TO THOSE JAILED AFTER THE JUNE DISTURBANCES IN RADOM AND URSUS, GIEREK SAID THAT THIS HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH POLITICS AND THAT THE FIVE PEOPLE STILL IN JAIL WERE GUILTY OF ORDINARY CRIMES. THREE OF THEM, HE SAID, WERE "NOTORIOUS THIEVES."

5. ASKED ABOUT POLAND'S DEBT TO THE WEST, GIEREK SAID THERE WAS "SOME EXAGGERATION" ABOUT THIS. HE ADDED THAT POLAND HAD NOT TAKEN CREDITS FOR CONSUMPTION PURPOSES. NEARLY EVERYTHING HAD BEEN FOR INVESTMENT IN THE POLISH ECONOMY, PRIMARILY INDUSTRIAL MODERNIZATION AND ACQUISITION OF NEW TECHNOLOGY. IF WESTERN CREDITORS BECAME IMPATIENT, GIEREK CONCLUDED IN A SOMEWHAT CAVALIER WAY, POLAND AT ANY TIME COULD CUT BACK INVESTMENT AND REPAY THE DEBTS.

6. THE PRINCIPAL DOMESTIC PROBLEM EMPHASIZED BY GIEREK WAS HOUSING. POINTING OUT THAT THE NUMBER OF MARRIAGES HAD CLIMBED DRAMATICALLY TO 327,000 IN 1976, GIEREK SAID POLAND MUST FIND HOUSING FOR THESE NEWLY MARRIED COUPLES IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS OR FACE A DROP IN DEMOGRAPHIC GROWTH. IT WAS AN "ENORMOUS ISSUE" WHICH WOULD NOT BE SOLVED EASILY, HE ADMITTED.

7. IN ANSWER TO RESTON'S QUESTION ABOUT THE FIRST SECRETARY'S EXPECTATIONS FOR WORLD PEACE IN THE LAST QUARTER OF THE CENTURY, GIEREK FIRST DESCRIBED HIMSELF AS BASICALLY "AN OPTIMIST" AND THEN AT SOME LENGTH DESCRIBED HIS DEEP CONCERN ABOUT THE GROWING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NUMBER OF NATIONS WITH THE CAPABILITY OF MANUFACTURING
NUCLEAR WEAPONS. " WE HAVE MUCH TO DO TOGETHER,"
GIEREK SAID, TO RESOLVE THIS PROBLEM.

8. FOR USIA- PLEASE PASS BY USINFO ANY RESTON
REPORTS BASED ON HIS VISIT TO WARSAW.
DAVIES

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Message Attributes

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